

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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USIA-15 SAM-01 ACDA-19 DPW-01 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01

TRSE-00 DRC-01 NEA-11 EB-11 COME-00 STR-08 /179 W

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R 051135Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 356

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 1981

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS PFOR, AU, TH

SUBJECT: WHITLAM VIST

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: A. BANGKOK 1832: B. BANGKOK 1839 C. BANGKOK 1908

D. CINCPAC HONOLULU 042253Z FEB 74

SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM CONCLUDED HIS FOUR DAY VISIT TO THAILAND FEBRUARY 4, NO HITCHES DEVELOPED AND THE AUSTRALIANS RECEIVED A SUSTAINED AND HIGHLY FAVORABLE PRESS THROUGHOUT THEIR STAY. THE THAI APPLAUDED WHITLAM'S PUBLIC APPEARANCES AND STATEMENTS AS REFRESHINGLY CANDID AND INDEPENDENT. THERE WAS NO PRETEXT FOR CONTROVERSY AND NONE AROSE. WHITLAM MADE A POINT DEALING WITH THE THAI AS AN EQUAL WHICH STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD. THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS OF INTEREST WERE CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC, ASEAN RELATIONSHIPS UNCLASSIFIED

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SEATO, AND THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE U.S. CAME IN FOR COMMENT.

END SUMMARY.

1. CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC: THE PRIME MINISTER CAPITALIZED ON AUSTRALIA'S RELATIVELY SMALL CONTRIBUTION TO THAILAND AND ON THE GOOD RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE IDENTIFIED HIS GOVERNMENT WITH MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS OF JOINT COOPERATION IN THAI DEVELOPMENT HIS VISIT FACILITATED A CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT ALONG WITH A TRADE AGREEMENT (REF B) WHITLAM PUBLIC ADDRESSED THE ECONOMIC LINKS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND THE IMBALANCE OF TRADE AGAINST THAILAND. HE POINTED TO THE 25 PERCENT REDUCTION OF TARIFFS GRANTED TO ALL COUNTRIES TRADING WITH AUSTRALIA LAST YEAR, AND TO THE INTRODUCTION OF ADDITIONAL PREFERENCES THIS YEAR TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE PRIME MINISTER DESCRIBED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FACILITY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF OVERSEAS TRADE TO PROVIDE MARKET RESEARCH AND TO HANDLE TRADE INQUIRIES. HE URGED THE THAI TO MAKE USE OF IT AS A MEASURE TO REDUCE THE IMBALANCE BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRIES. FINALLY, HE PLEDGED AN ELEVEN PERCENT INCREASE IN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THAILAND OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS. AUSTRALIA PROVIDES 75 PERCENT OF ITS AID THROUGH THE COLOMBO PLAN, AND THE BALANCE THROUGH SEATO. TOTAL AID FOR THAILAND DURING 1973 REACHED AUSTRALIAN \$4 MILLION.

2. ASEAN: WHITLAM PRAISED ASEAN AS THE ONLY REGIONAL ORGANIZATION WITH A GROWING FUTURE AND REITERATED AUSTRALIA'S WILLINGNESS TO AID COLLECTIVE ASEAN PROJECTS. HE DECLARED, HOWEVER, THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DID NOT SEEK MEMBERSHIP IN ASEAN AND ADDED HIS BELIEF THAT TIME WOULD PROVE THE VALUE OF A WIDER ASIAN AND PACIFIC FORUM. IN SUGGESTING THE WIDER FORUM HE DID NOT WISH TO IMPLY THAT IT SHOULD OR COULD SUPPLANT ASEAN.

3. SEATO: IN HIS PUBLIC SPEECH, AND WITH OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO THE UNITED STATES, WHITLAM DECLARED IT WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD REGARD COUNTRIES LIKE THAILAND AND HER ASIAN PARTNERS AS A MILITARY BUFFER PLACED BY GEOGRAPHY FOR AUSTRALIA'S CONVENIENCE (REF B) HE VIEWED DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF UNCLASSIFIED

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THE GENERAL TREND OF WIDENING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. HE SAID THAT AUSTRALIA'S NEW RELATIONS WITH CHINA ARE BASED ON THE REJECTION OF THE RELEVANCE TODAY OF THE DULLES CONCEPT OF THE MILITARY CONTAINMENT OF CHINA. THE WAR OF INTERVENTION IN VIETNAM WAS CREATED BY THE DOCTRINE AND HAD DESTROYED THAT DOCTRINE. THE GOVERNMENT HAD ADDRESSED ITSELF TO THE CONCEPT OF SEATO ON ASSUMING

OFFICE FOURTEEN MONTHS AGO. THAILAND'S POSITION AND THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THAILAND ATTACHES TO THE MANILA TREATY HAD PERSUADED HIM TOWORK WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION FOR MODIFICATION OF ITS OPERATION AND ORIENTATION. HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT SEATO ARRANGEMENT. WHITLAM OBSERVED THAT THE PRINCIPLES EXPRESSED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.KISSINGER HAD GIVEN THE "COUP DE GRACE" HOWEVER, TO THE DULLES CONCEPT OF THE CONTAINMENT OF CHINA. HE SAID THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD UNDERPIN CONFIDENCE BUT NOT UNDERWRITE A POLICY OF CONTAINMENT.

4. DURING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, WHITLAM RESPONDED TO A QUESTION ABOUT AMERICAN BASES IN THAILAND BY SAYING HIS GOVERNMENT AND PARTY HAD THE STRONGEST OBJECTION TO THE U.S. AIR FORCE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM AND DECLARED THE BOMBING WAS "MILITARILY INEFFECTIVE AND MORALLY MONSTROUS" (REF B) HE REGRETTED THAT THAI BASES WERE USED. THIS BOMBING HAD NOW CEASED AND HE WAS SATISFIED THERE COULD BE NO RESUMPTION OF AMERICAN BOMBING IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD BECAUSE THERE WAS NEW SITUATION.

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5. DEFENSE U.S. AND ASIA) IN HIS PRINCIPAL SPEECH.

WHITLAM STATED "WE HAVE AN IMPORTANT DEFENSE TREATY WITH THE U.S. AND NEW ZEALAND BUT THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN REGARDED AS THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL OF AUSTRALIA'S DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICIES AND IT SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN VIEWED SOLELY OR PRINCIPALLY AS A DEFENSE ASSOCIATION YET THERE DEVELOPED IN AUSTRALIA OVER A GENERATION A TENDENCY TO VIEW ALL MATTERS BEYOND OUR SHORES THROUGH THE SINGLE NARROW FOCUS OF CHINA. WHAT WE ARE NOW TRYING TO DO IS WIDEN THE RANGE OF OUR VISION NOT TO DOWNGRADE THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH THE U.S. BUT TO UPGRADE THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS, ABOVE ALL IN ASIA, WE BELIEVE WE ARE THEREBY CREATING A MORE MATURE PARTNERSHIP. AND WE BELIEVE THAT FRANKNESS IS THE BEST BASIS FOR FRIENDSHIP. WE EXPECT FRANKNESS: WE INTEND TO BE FRANK.

6. INDIAN OCEAN: DURING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, WHITLAM WAS ASKED ABOUT HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SOVIET PRESENCE
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IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND TOWARD A COMMENT MADE IN BRITAIN THAT INDIA AND SRI LANKA'S ATTITUDE FOR A PEACEFUL INDIAN OCEAN IS UNREALISTIC. WHITLAM RESPONDED THAT "AUSTRALIA WAS ON THE INDIAN AND THE PACIFIC OCEANS. HE DID NOT WANT TO SPEAK IN THESE MATTERS IN TERMS OF THREATS. THE FACT IS THAT SOME NATIONS HAVE QUITE LARGE NAVIES. AS THE LAW OF THE SEA STANDS AT THE MOMENT, THEY CAN SAIL THE HIGH SEAS. I WOULD NOT LIKE THE INDIAN OCEAN TO BECOME A SCENE OF CONFRONTATION AS SAY THE MEDITERRANEAN HAS. I BELIEVE WE WOULD HAVE THE SUPPORT OF MOST OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS, SO MANY OF WHICH LIE WITHIN AND AROUND THE INDIAN OCEAN. JUST AS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS POSITIVELY SUPPORTED THE ASEAN INITIATIVE FOR A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY, SO TOO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS POSITIVELY SUPPORTED THE SRI LANKAN PROPOSAL FOR A NEUTRAL INDIAN OCEANS, AND AUSTRALIA IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE WHICH THE UNITED NATIONS HAS SET UP TO PROMOTE THAT CONCEPT.

7. COMMENT: THE PUBLIC AND PRESS WELCOMED WHITLAM'S VIEWS WITHOUT CRITICISM (REFS A AND C) EDITORIAL DOUBTS WERE EXPRESSED CONCERNING THE PRIME MINISTER'S PROPOSAL FOR A WIDER ASIAN AND PACIFIC FORUM AT THIS POINT IN TIME. THE STUDENTS WERE QUIESCENT AND, AS ONE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL PUT IT, "AFTER TANAK, THIS WAS A BREEZE.

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